

Press release: Millions of nuisance PPI calls lands director with 8-year ban

Richard Jones (31), from Carmarthen, Wales, was the director of Miss-Sold Products UK Limited and Your Money Rights Limited, the two companies at the centre of investigations by the ICO and the Insolvency Service.

This latest case takes the total period of director disqualifications achieved through collaboration between the ICO, the Insolvency Service and other enforcement bodies, [past the 100 year mark](#).

Miss-Sold Products UK Limited was a company Richard Jones used as a vehicle to make unsolicited phone calls contrary to the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations*.

The company came to the attention of the ICO after the regulator received 146 complaints between November 2015 and March 2016 about automated phone calls from telephone numbers used by Miss-Sold Products UK.

Further investigations by the ICO found that in a five-month period, Miss-Sold Products UK made close to 75 million automated marketing calls, primarily containing a recorded message about PPI refunds.

The ICO attempted to engage with Miss-Sold Products UK from May 2017 onwards but were stonewalled before issuing a £350,000 penalty against the company for making unsolicited marketing calls to people without their specific consent and for failing to include a company name and contact details in the recorded message.

Miss-Sold Products UK failed to pay the debt and the company was wound-up through the courts in June 2018.

Richard Jones also used a second company, Your Money Rights Limited, as an additional vehicle to make unsolicited PPI calls.

In a near identical set of events, the ICO investigated Your Money Rights after the regulator received more than 250 complaints between March and July 2016 about automated calls from telephone numbers used by the company.

This time round, the ICO found that in a five month period Richard Jones' second company made more than 146 million automated marketing calls to people who had not consented to be called, with a recorded message about PPI refunds.

The ICO attempted to engage with Your Money Rights but similar to proceedings with the first company, Miss-Sold Products UK, the regulator was thwarted in their enquiries.

This resulted in a second £350,000 fine being issued against the company for making unsolicited marketing calls to people who had not consented and for failing to include a company name and contact details in the recorded message.

Your Money Rights failed to discharge the debt and the company was also wound up on the petition of the ICO in March 2018.

Following referrals from the ICO, further investigations were conducted by the Insolvency Service to assess Richard Jones' activities and how he had contributed to cause the two companies to breach the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations.

Investigators concluded that Richard Jones played a central role, which led him to submit a disqualification undertaking to the Secretary of State.

Effective from 1 March 2019, Richard Jones is banned for eight years from directly or indirectly becoming involved, without the permission of the court, in the promotion, formation or management of a company.

David Brooks, Chief Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

There are no justifications Richard Jones could provide that would have excused him from what he had done. Not only did he use two separate companies to make the unsolicited phone calls but we are talking about millions of intrusive calls rather than a small handful.

Unsolicited phone calls cause misery and harm to unsuspecting people and being banned for eight years will put a significant dent on Richard Jones' ability to do something similar again.

Andy Curry, ICO Investigations Group Manager, said:

Richard Jones is one of the worst offenders we have come across in the 15 years since laws around electronic nuisance marketing were introduced. This disqualification which takes him out of action is good news for all those who have been a victim of his cold calling and should be a warning to other operators who use similar marketing techniques.

The net is tightening and we now have increased powers to make directors and other company officers responsible personally liable for fines of up to £500,000 for nuisance marketing.

*Guidance on the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR)

regulations are available from the [ICO](#).

Your Money Rights Limited (Company number 06728950)

Miss- Sold Products UK Limited (Company number 09470330)

Richard Jones is from Carmarthen, Wales, and his date of birth is November 1987

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings.

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#).

The Insolvency Service administers the insolvency regime, investigating all compulsory liquidations and individual insolvencies (bankruptcies) through the Official Receiver to establish why they became insolvent. It may also use powers under the Companies Act 1985 to conduct confidential fact-finding investigations into the activities of live limited companies in the UK. In addition, the agency deals with disqualification of directors in corporate failures, assesses and pays statutory entitlement to redundancy payments when an employer cannot or will not pay employees, provides banking and investment services for bankruptcy and liquidation estate funds and advises ministers and other government departments on insolvency law and practice.

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[Press release: Amber Rudd hears from jobcentres at the heart of South West communities](#)

Work and Pensions Secretary Amber Rudd has today (Friday 1 March) opened the new Taunton-based community Link Centre.

The centre will work with people who are socially isolated and less likely to access traditional employment services such as jobcentres.

Amber Rudd also visited jobcentres in Taunton and Chippenham, learning about how their work has contributed to the region's record-breaking employment (79.8%).

Work and Pensions Secretary Amber Rudd said:

We can be quick to forget the difference having a job makes.

For most people, being in work is good for their mental and physical health and is the best way for them to secure financial stability.

And I know that's what our dedicated jobcentre staff want to help people achieve – peace of mind and a path to building a fulfilling future.

I want to make sure that everyone who needs jobcentre support knows how to access it, and that they trust us to help them whatever their circumstances.

As well as continuing her fact-finding tour to establish how Universal Credit is working in local communities across the United Kingdom, Amber Rudd heard from staff in Chippenham about how they were helping homeless people access support. And jobcentre workers in Taunton told her about their efforts to encourage employers to be [Disability Confident](#), opening up their jobs to people with disabilities and health conditions.

Since her appointment in November, Amber Rudd has been reviewing the government's key welfare reform, [Universal Credit](#), which replaces 6 different benefits with one single payment.

Earlier this year, [Amber Rudd announced](#) that the government would not extend the 2-child limit on Universal Credit for children born before April 2017, when the policy came into effect, benefiting around 15,000 families.

She also announced changes designed to make Universal Credit fairer, including pilot schemes to provide more frequent payments for new claimants, a new online system for private landlords and a more flexible approach to childcare provisions.

Follow DWP on:

[Press release: Marketing Wales to the World on St David's Day](#)

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns was joined by leading Welsh businesses, as he pushed the button for the Market Open Ceremony in the City of London this morning [Friday, 1 March].

This is the first time the prestigious ceremony has been used to celebrate St David's Day and highlight the work of innovative Wales-based companies making their mark on the international stage.

Those attending today's start of trading event included IQE, Delio Wealth and Newport Wafer Fab as well as representatives from business organisations including CBI Wales and IoD Wales.

The event was held as part of the Wales Week in London celebrations, an annual showcase of over 100 activities and events in the UK capital that celebrate and promote everything that's great about Wales.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

St David's Day is an important day for the whole of Wales to reflect on the strength of our unique history, language and culture.

It is also an important reminder of the dynamism of modern Wales. We are home to some of the world's most innovative companies and our products and services in industries such as semiconductors, cyber security and the financial and insurance sectors are exported to all corners of the globe.

The UK Government is working hard to continue that trend by supporting Welsh firms to enter and expand into growing markets around the world. I hope young Welsh firms can take inspiration from today's event and start their own international success story.

Nikhil Rathi, CEO of London Stock Exchange plc & Director of International Development, LSEG said:

London Stock Exchange is proud of its central role in supporting Welsh business. Thirty-six companies from Wales are currently listed on our markets with a combined market capitalisation in excess of £27.3 billion.

We are also particularly proud to support smaller Welsh businesses and entrepreneurs develop into the market leaders and household names of tomorrow through a number of tailored initiatives, such as our ELITE programme and our Companies to Inspire Britain report.

We are delighted to welcome Secretary of State for Wales, Alun Cairns, to celebrate St David's Day by opening trading on London Stock Exchange this morning.

ENDS

Press release: One month to go before introduction of Making Tax Digital for VAT

Almost 1.2 million businesses have one month to go before the introduction of Making Tax Digital (MTD) – a new way of keeping business records and submitting digital VAT returns.

HMRC is urging businesses to sign up now. [Easy-to-use guides](#) for businesses, agents and others are available on GOV.UK.

Nearly 30,000 businesses have already signed up to the new service which will give them a more integrated approach to business and tax. This will reduce the time they spend on administration in the longer term and make it easier for them to get their tax right.

For VAT periods from 1 April 2019, most businesses above the VAT threshold will need to keep their records digitally and submit their VAT return using MTD-compatible software. HMRC has written to every business that will be mandated with information on what they should do and how.

Mel Stride, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, said:

It has never been more important for businesses to be able to seize the opportunities that digital technology offers. Making Tax Digital helps them to do just that – making it easier for businesses to get their tax right first time by transforming how they keep their records and send information to HMRC.

It will give businesses more control over their finances, allowing them to spend time focusing on innovation, growth and the creation

of jobs.

Theresa Middleton, Director of the Making Tax Digital for Business Programme, said:

There are over 160 software products for businesses to choose from with a range of prices, including some that are free, offering different levels of functionality to suit every business. It's time to get on board and join the thousands of businesses already experiencing the benefits of MTD.

Marco Forgione, CEO of the British Antique Dealers Association, said:

I urge all business to take action immediately. There are many very simple solutions available to make the process of filing really simple.

Making Tax Digital will help our members to streamline record keeping, ease the submission of returns and reduce the chances of an error or oversight. The process is straightforward and efficient.

What do businesses need to do?

Accountants or other tax representative will already be aware of MTD and will advise businesses how and when they need to make changes to be ready for the new service.

Those already using software will simply need to ensure it's MTD-compatible then sign up to the new service and authorise their software for MTD.

For those who are not using an accountant or don't currently use software, it is quick and easy to sign up and there is lots of information available to help them prepare, including about what software is available.

Take steps to find out if your business is affected by the Making Tax Digital changes and what you need to do if it is. Most businesses above the VAT threshold have to start keeping their records digitally and sending their VAT return to HMRC direct from their software for VAT periods starting on or after 1 April.

Talk to your accountant or other agent – if you use one to manage your VAT affairs – about how they are making returns MTD-compliant.

Speak to your software provider if you already use software to ensure it will be compatible.

Those businesses that are either not represented by an accountant and/or do

not already use software will need to select software to use and sign up to MTD, then authorise their new software for MTD. Our GOV.UK webpages provide information on a wide variety of products, from free software for businesses with more straightforward tax affairs, to increasingly sophisticated paid solutions. There are also products that can be used in conjunction with a spreadsheet for those businesses that don't want to change their underlying record keeping system.

[There are webinars and videos for Making Tax Digital available online.](#)

MTD is part of the government's #Smartergov campaign which was launched to drive innovation through the public sector.

Further Information

HMRC recognises that businesses will require time to become familiar with the new requirements of MTD. HMRC has been clear that during the first year of mandation, it will take a light touch approach to digital record keeping and filing penalties where businesses are doing their best to comply with the law. But this does not mean a blanket 'no penalties promise'.

No business will be forced to go digital for their VAT returns if they are unable to. Anyone who is already exempt from online filing of VAT will remain so under MTD, and there is further provision for those who cannot adapt to the new service due to age, disability, location or religion to apply for an exemption.

Those businesses that are registered for VAT but are below the VAT threshold are also not required to use the MTD service, but can choose to do so.

[News story: New road to cut Worcester congestion](#)

Roads Minister Jesse Norman today (1 March 2019) approved almost £55 million of government funding for the Southern Link Road.

The major project, alongside the existing Carrington Bridge, will provide much needed congestion relief for residents and businesses, while boosting jobs and economic growth in areas like Great Malvern by transforming access to the M5.

This will also improve access to Birmingham International Airport and Worcestershire Parkway Station, creating better journeys for commuters and supporting the creation of more than 6,000 jobs.

Roads Minister Jesse Norman said:

The government is investing record amounts to improve journeys in our towns and cities, boosting local economies.

This new road will help improve everyday journeys in and around Worcester, easing traffic for local people in Worcestershire and Herefordshire, as well as supporting thousands of new homes and jobs.

The dual carriageway will connect the M5 to the west of Worcestershire and Herefordshire, and provide a congestion-busting bypass to Worcester city centre, set to cut average journey times along the A4440 in both directions during peak hours in the opening year.

The bypass will also help improve air quality, and will also see 2 new bridges, new cycle and pedestrian routes as well as junction improvements.

Worcestershire County Council's Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy and Infrastructure, Councillor Ken Pollock, said:

This is great news for Worcestershire! We welcome this announcement of funding approval which paves the way for the final phase of the scheme to fully dual the Southern Link Road from the M5 to the Powick Roundabout.

Works on this important and much needed final phase will see Carrington Bridge extended and 1.5km of viaduct being built between the Ketch and Powick roundabouts. We look forward to sharing further details about this final phase which also includes an improved Ketch Viewpoint and underpass in addition to a footbridge over Hams Way in the next couple of weeks.

Worcestershire County Council is contributing £7.5 million to the £62 million scheme.

The government funding comes from the Large Local Majors Fund, providing vital infrastructure for economic growth.